

South Dover Elementary wins state school counseling award

Capital School District's South Dover Elementary School has earned Delaware's Sapphire Award for Excellence in School Counseling.

This state recognition, now in its second year, recognizes school counseling programs that are comprehensive, data-informed and designed to serve all students.

"South Dover Elementary School's counseling program exemplifies the valuable use of data to strategically design services and interventions to improve student outcomes," Secretary of Education Susan Bunting said, noting a highlight of the program is the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support to decrease behavior referrals.

Under the school's program, all students participate in classroom lessons on "Bucket Filling, Zones of Regulation and Kelso's Choices," a conflict management curriculum. Students in need of additional support participate in the school counseling check-in/check-out program to continue to work toward improving their behavior. Some students are connected to additional resources to support their success. School officials said their monitoring of the interventions and students showed a significant decrease in overall behavior referrals.

Research shows that school counseling programs that are aligned to the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model improve student outcomes. These comprehensive programs:

- are based on data-informed decision-making;
- are delivered to all students systematically;
- include developmentally appropriate curriculum focused on

the mindsets and behaviors all students need for postsecondary readiness and success;

- close achievement and opportunity gaps; and
- result in improved student achievement, attendance and discipline.

Through the Delaware Department of Education's partnership with the Delaware School Counselor Association (DSCA) and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), South Dover Elementary School now is eligible to also receive ASCA's Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) award.

South Dover Elementary will be recognized formally for the honor during DSCA's National School Counseling Week celebrations February 7-11, 2022.

Smyrna High School won the award in the state award program's inaugural year last year.

The Sapphire Award is open to all Delaware public school districts and charter schools. School counseling programs must be implemented by a state-certified school counselor.

Media contact: Alison May, alison.may@doe.k12.de.us, (302) 735-4006